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STAFF NOTES:

Latin American Trends

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LATIN AMERICAN TRENDS

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Western Hemisphere Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Uruguay: Bordaberry Seeks to Enhance Position

1+3
 Seizing on the momentum of the relatively favorable outcome of his most recent confrontation with the military (see Latin American Trends, August 13, 1975, and August 20, 1975), President Bordaberry is attempting--with some apparent success--to enhance his own popularity and shed his image as a mere figure-head.

2+3
 Responding to the enthusiasm of a quarter million people commemorating the 150th anniversary of Uruguay's independence, Bordaberry--usually a mediocre speaker--launched into an emotional and effective defense of his government. The President underscored the anti-Communist and pro-development nature of his administration and pointed out the folly of returning to the politics of the past. The latter theme gives credibility to the widely-held belief that the presidential election scheduled for 1976 will be canceled, allowing Bordaberry to stay in office beyond his current term.

1+3
 While the military has dominated the government since June 1973, Bordaberry has recently been willing to confront the armed forces over economic policy-making. His tenacity and personal integrity have increased his popularity, a fact not lost on the military. Uruguayan military leaders were both surprised and impressed by the outpouring of support for the President at the independence day celebration. This manifestation, plus a recent favorable Gallup Poll rating for Bordaberry, could provide him with additional bargaining power in his future dealings with the armed forces. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Nicaragua: Reaction to Anderson's Charges

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Jack Anderson's recent stinging columns on President Somoza--characterizing him as "the world's greediest ruler"--have outraged the Nicaraguan strongman. Somoza has told the new US ambassador that he views the articles as part of an effort by the opposition to incite violence and embarrass his government, but he also believes US government agencies are out to destroy him.

1
Opposition leader and newspaper publisher Pedro Joaquin Chamorro is a likely domestic target for Somoza's continued wrath. Somoza conducted a vendetta against Chamorro, a vocal and long-standing critic of the regime, in the wake of the successful attack and flight to Cuba last December by the terrorist Sandinist National Liberation Front, and he is again casting about for scapegoats. Already censors have blocked publication of one issue of Chamorro's paper.
2

3
[REDACTED] has reported that publication of Anderson's columns came during foreign policy consultations in Managua, and may have prompted Somoza to decide to explore opening relations with Romania and Yugoslavia and other initiatives to help improve Nicaragua's image with the Third World. Such moves, hardly momentous in the context of the present non-aligned movement, nonetheless would represent a significant policy departure for this traditionally extremely close US ally.

1
Somoza, and others about him, have felt that there is a strong anti-Somoza clique in the Embassy and State department. These columns, coinciding with the departure of Ambassador Shelton, whom Somoza regarded as a great friend, may have deepened his suspicions. In a

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14 2 conversation with the US Ambassador on August 27, Somoza stated that if the US Government did not deny Anderson's charge that US aid funds had been misused in Nicaragua, it would seriously damage the aid program and bilateral relations. Although Somoza said he wished to avoid polemics with Anderson, he indicated a willingness to get friends in the US Congress to raise the matter there. Thus far, Somoza's veteran ambassador in Washington has simply sent a letter to the WASHINGTON POST and the distributor of Anderson's column rejecting the allegations, but the Nicaraguan leader also seems intent on securing an official denial of at least some of Anderson's charges as a test of US-Nicaraguan relations under the new ambassador. (SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD)

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Situation Heats Up In Surinam

With the approach of November 25, the date for Surinam's independence from the Netherlands, there is increasing concern over prospects for a stable transition.

Centrist Minister-President Henk Arron is struggling to hold together his coalition of both militant and non-militant Creoles (blacks) and a few East Indians and Chinese. The tactics of the leader of the left wing of the coalition, black-power advocate Edward Bruma, have exacerbated the fears of Hindustanis, Javanese, and Chinese that Surinam is rapidly becoming a Creole-dominated state. As a result, several non-Creole leaders have proven susceptible to the efforts of the major opposition party, which represents most of Surinam's East Asians, to get them to abandon the government coalition, leaving it with only a slim parliamentary majority.

The demagogic Bruma has used the state purchasing and distributing agency to increase his popularity with poor urban blacks while squeezing East Indian farmers and Chinese merchants. Furthermore, under his party's leadership the national police have engaged in a semi-strike that has led to a near breakdown in public order. The control of the police by Bruma's party has led non-militants in the government to insist that the Ministry of Defense, which will be created after independence, be under their control as a counter weight.

Another indication of growing instability was the riot in early August by 400 workers at the smelting and refining complex belonging to the Surinam Aluminum Company (Suralco), a subsidiary of the Aluminum Company of America. The disturbance--the first in 58 years of the company's operation--grew out of unskilled workers'

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fear that they would be laid off. The refusal of the police to restore order may compound the impact the incident will have on foreign investment.

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The mild-mannered Arron will try to paper over the split in his government by reining in Bruma far enough to mollify its non-Creole members. Bruma will probably find it in his interest to go along at least until independence is achieved and the Dutch garrison is removed. East Indians and Chinese, regardless of political affiliation, have insisted that they be consulted on the draft constitution to ensure that measures are adopted to guarantee the civil rights of non-Creoles. If Arron allows an orderly constitutional debate, it could mean that independence would have to be postponed. Meanwhile, racial tension and economic uncertainty will continue to cause apprehensive Surinamers to depart for the Netherlands at rates reported to be as high as 500 per week. (SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM)



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Cuba: Book Review

Frank Mankiewicz' and Kirby Jones' recent book, WITH FIDEL: A PORTRAIT OF CASTRO AND CUBA, is patterned on a study done in the mid-60s by Lee Lockwood. Missing from the Mankiewicz-Jones book, however, are Lockwood's outstanding complementary photography, his broad knowledge of Cuban events, and his skillful interrogation of Castro.

Mankiewicz and Jones were obviously awed by the man they were interviewing, and their political inclination, reflected in their book's main title, apparently prevented them from pressing questions that might have embarrassed him. Their poor preparation before visiting Cuba left them ill-prepared to challenge some of the more atrocious absurdities Castro foisted on them, and their inattention to detail resulted in some gross inaccuracies salted throughout their narrative. Although they note that Castro chose them from a host of eager journalists and also chose the time for their visit, they never seem to realize that they were merely being used for Havana's own propaganda purposes. Nevertheless, their book, with all its shortcomings, is a useful contribution to the literature on Cuba because for the discerning reader it provides an intimate glimpse of the contemporary Fidel, a man who has changed dramatically since the Lockwood interview.

The main portion of the book--and its most valuable part--consists of the text of the co-authors' lengthy conversations with Castro. In it, the Cuban prime minister emerges as an intelligent, smooth-talking, extremely knowledgeable and shrewd politician who mesmerizes his guests with his charm and apparent candor. Still a master of the spoken word, Castro now seems more prone to making statements that test one's gullibility; distorting facts seems to come more easily to him and at times he seems to

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have little trouble making statements he almost certainly does not believe. He can now mouth communist ideological jargon that years ago would have drawn his scorn, and his willingness to submit so completely to Moscow's direction in the field of ideology is a measure of the trauma his ego has had to undergo over the past decade.

In his musings, Castro often gives evidence of a greater maturity and of an ability to look back on some events more objectively than had been his custom in the early years of the Revolution. Some of this obviously was done with a specific purpose in mind. He acknowledged, for example, that he had made a significant contribution to the alienation of the US in the early 1960s and even admitted the foolishness of the position he maintained at the time of the missile crisis in 1962. At other times, however, he makes revealing but less pointed remarks. In likening Dominican revolutionary Colonel Francisco Caamano to Che Guevara, for example, he lamented the fact that sometimes revolutionaries were betrayed by their own enthusiasm; that is about as close as he has ever come to public criticism of either Guevara or Caamano.

In questioning Castro, the authors showed little imagination. Instead of fencing pointlessly with him over theoretical issues such as the eventual disappearance of the state in the final stages of communism, they should have pressed him on matters of much more immediate importance. When he criticized the US for allegedly protecting "some of Batista's worst criminals," why did the authors not ask him why he never requested the extradition of any of those he wanted to prosecute? When he said he refused to release political prisoners in Cuba in exchange for political prisoners in Chile on the grounds that "it is a moral question, an issue of justice, not a question of negotiations," why was he not reminded of the hundreds of prisoners ransomed through negotiations

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with the US following the Bay of Pigs? When Castro alleges that he responded to Senators Pell and Javits' expressed interest in US political prisoners by releasing four of them, why is the reader not told that the four were not political prisoners but had been convicted of common crimes and were unrelated to those in which Pell and Javits had indicated an interest?

When Castro boasted that in revolutionary Cuba "there has never been a conflict between the government and the masses" and that "never has a soldier been used against the people," why was not his memory refreshed with a reference to occasions such as that in the early 1960s when troops and tanks were sent to Matanzas Province to put down by force a series of housewives' protest demonstrations? When Castro maintained that "this is not a personal government; not a single decision is made unilaterally," why is there no reference to the mounds of evidence to the contrary that can be found in the works of such pro-Castro authors as Rene Dumont and K.S. Karol?

The authors are also given to inaccurate generalities in the remaining portion of the book that tend to dilute its value. Every young Cuban male, for example, does not have to serve three years in the armed forces, nor is every able-bodied person armed and required to take part in occasional militia training. The Matanzas Province elections in mid-1974 were not the first held in Cuba since the Revolution, and the government had decided before, not after, the elections to expand the system to the rest of the country. Nor were the elections "unrigged."

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The authors had an excellent opportunity to educate many in the US on present-day Cuba and its fascinating leader, but the work they produced does not live up to that potential. What is worse, many of the book's readers will assume it is an in-depth study by competent observers when in fact it is a superficial work by writers woefully ill-equipped for their task. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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